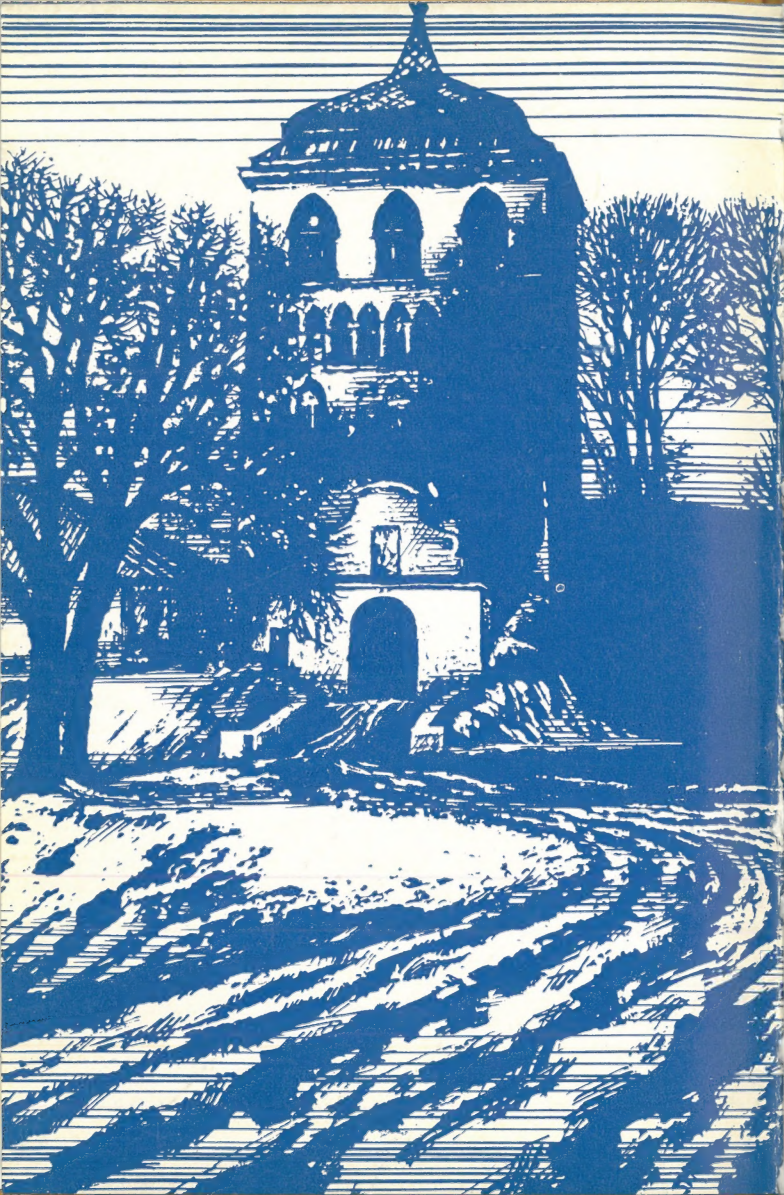


Boris Kharchuk

**THE NIGHTS
OF DEATH**

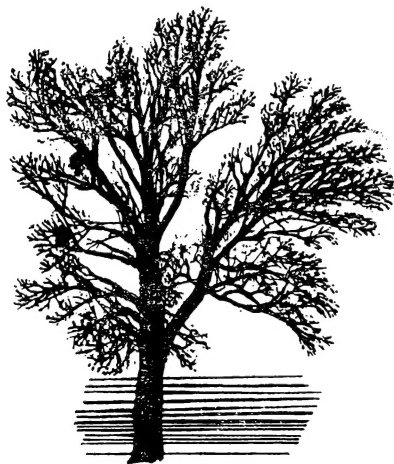




Boris Kharchuk

THE NIGHTS OF DEATH

Pamphlets



Kiev
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1981

БОРИС ХАРЧУК

РОЗСТРІЛЯНІ НОЧІ. Н а р и с и

Translated from the Ukrainian by Marko Ishchuk

БОРИС НИКИТОВИЧ ХАРЧУК

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A WORD ABOUT DERMAN

The Carpathian Mountains are far away, but their spurs tower even in the Volyn Region. The Volyn Tatras grandly ascend near the ancient town of Kremenets, stretching to the north-east, leaning in a range of steep hills to the Polissya. It is there, in the ravines, in the shadows of the overhanging Verkhiv Forest that Derman, a very old Ukrainian village, is located. From the top of the Turetska Hora hill which protects the village from snowstorms with its hefty shoulder, one can view a scenic panorama — green-crowned hills, haystacks by the river, and the wide collective-farm fields behind a row of poplars that seem to have been stopped abruptly when running somewhere away from the village. Overhead are boundless blue skies and, in front, almost as boundless expanses.

The name of the village, Derman, probably originates from the Ukrainian verb **drimaty**, meaning to doze off, to take a nap. Once, they say, a thick forest rustled in the wind in place of Derman. According to legend, the Grand Duke of Ostrog found respite under an oak tree after hunting and dozed off when a wolf attacked him... The Duke later called the place "Driman" to commemorate the unpleasant occurrence.

Whether this really happened or not, is hard to say, but the fact remains that Derman has a long history. The roots of its family tree are buried back in the 13th century. On top of one of

the hills still stands the monastery one of whose Fathers Superior was Meletius Smotrisky and where Ivan Fedorov, the first Russian and Ukrainian book printer, once worked.

Derman inhabitants proved staunch in beating off the raids of the khans and beys. Many a Tatar rider fell in battle here. Its villagers served in the Zaporizhian Sich, in the regiments of Bohdan Khmelnitsky and often rebelled against Polish magnates.

The proud spirit of liberty and the courageous rebuff to the enemy always prevailed in Derman.

And still, Derman farmers had never experienced as much grief and suffering as under the Nazi yoke and in the feast of violence of Hitler's hirelings of the Bandera and Melnyk stock. Some of Derman's residents — a miserable handful — came out as turncoats who expressed readiness to collaborate with the Nazi aggressors. These were either onetime kulaks or just morally degraded characters. The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) thugs were also assisted by treacherous clergy. The monastery, once a center of promulgating education and progress, was turned by the nationalist shepherds into a gangster's hideout. Within the walls of this House of God, with His Name on their lips, they tortured innocent people. In His Name, they also gave shelter, down deep dark cellars, to the most heinous killers. The deep well on the premises was used to conceal weapons. The OUN thugs promptly reciprocated for the monastery's generous assistance by ruining the belltower — an outstanding ancient architectural site.

Hair-raising atrocities were committed by the Nazi invaders, but even more terrifying acts were

perpetrated by their mercenaries — Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists — during the Nazi occupation and in the first postwar years. Neither the village being ruined by the Nazis (almost the whole part of the village, called Zaluzhya, was rased to the ground), nor the terror of the OUN-Bandera gangsters (over 450 residents were butchered at their treacherous hands), nothing could force the people of Derman to their knees.

It happened in December of 1945. The Nazi Third Reich was in rubble. A red flag was flying over the Reichstag. In their land, cleared of the Nazi scum forever, the Ukrainian people squared their shoulders and happily indulged in peacetime work.

Scared stiff by the approach of their people's judgement and reprisal, the leaders of the scandalous UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists hastily beat it in the wake of their masters, eventually to find their place on garbage heaps abroad. Some of these miserable types, however, stayed put, having secured themselves in bunkers deep underneath, like moles mortally afraid of daylight.

On instructions from their superiors who had sold themselves to U. S. and British imperialists, these surviving cutthroats continued, for a period of time, to commit acts of violence and atrocity against Soviet citizens in separate remote villages in Rovno Region. Abiding by orders from the OUN, this collection of brazen agents of bourgeois intelligence services went to ground, crawling out of their lairs like hungry wolves at night, going in for the kill.

Together with his gang, Hribok (a.k.a. Serhiy

Turchin), the district commandant of the SB, the so-called security service, hid in ravines in the Verkhiv Forest. He made a hideout for his band in the rocks of the Turetska Hora hill, in an old quarry. The yellow-blue villains would spend the day down old, half crumbled pits and ten-meter-long drifts, stuffing their bellies and waiting. At night, they would slip out to do their dirty jobs. Turchin's gang was made up of scoundrels, each type vying for an honorable place on the rogue's gallery exhibit. One of his underlings, a character by the name of Vasil Shevchuk (alias Vusatiy), was unmatched even amongst Turchin's gorillas, such were his violent and sadistic habits. One could hardly call him a human being. Rather, a dismal werewolf.

Much water of the Horyn River has run under the bridge since then, and yet many of the families still grieve over their unhealing wounds, inflicted by those monsters in human form. The following is our story about glaring truth of the tragedy of this old Ukrainian village.

THE DEAD WELL

It is 60 m deep. Once a day, the sun is reflected there, its rays bathing in its fluid cold. But why Dead Well? Digging it took five years. The whole Derman community took part. They dug it on top of the big Nahoryantsya Hill, lest people would have to go for water down its slopes, to the Ustyusya River. However, nobody draws water from this well now, ever since Maria Halaburda's husband was thrown in because he had refused to collaborate with the OUNites.

The bandits had tried to "persuade" him otherwise, at gunpoint, but the man found himself unable to act against his conscience and become a fratricide. He died with a clear conscience; he did not yield to the butchers.

On that tragic night when the Banderites caught her husband, Maria managed to escape. She ran away through kitchen gardens and hid with the neighbors. During the day, Maria tried to do some house chores and, toward the evening, slipped away, wandering all over the vicinity, lest they would find where she had spent the night.

Turchin ordered his henchmen to find Maria and deliver her at all costs, dead or alive. The reason the ringleader wanted her so much was because the woman had seen how the gangsters tortured her husband while prodding him to be lynched. He was afraid she would tell about the heinous crime and wanted to cover the tracks.

Maria wasn't cautious enough. Once, carrying two pails of water, she was intercepted by Shevchuk.

"Follow me," he barked, kicking the buckets out of her hands.

The woman wanted to scream, but there was nobody around. Besides, who would hear her far from the village in a meadow?

Maintaining a firm grip on her hand, the OUNite thug led her back of the houses, prodding her to Nahoryanka. Almost at the very rocky edge of the hill stood the house of Vira Kravets, some distance from the rest of the village. Surrounding the building was an old, thick orchard.

Without letting Maria out of his grip, Shevchuk approached the house from a side and knocked on the window.

Turchin appeared in the doorway. "So you've caught her. Good." He rubbed his hands together with apparent joy.

They kept Maria behind the house. Several other OUNites ran outside and bound her hands and feet with ropes.

Shevchuk ordered the Kravets wife and daughter to spend the night with some of their relatives. The old woman left her kerchief in the house and, despite her daughter's reasoning, returned for it. A snowstorm had just begun. Shevchuk was on guard in front of the gate. He allowed the elderly woman to enter. As she was walking out of the vestibule, something touched her shoulder. She had been warned not to raise her head while in the house. Yet, she ventured a glance with the corner of her eye and recognized Maria.

The Kravets family had a small home. Two people found it hard to push past one another in the alcove, although the sitting room offered more space.

Puffing at his cigarette of homemade acrid tobacco, Turchin was questioning Maria.

"Why do you hide at night? Why don't you sleep at home?"

"My poor lot makes me do so."

Turchin grinned and said to his henchmen:

"C'mon, boys, untie her hands. She makes quite a talkative woman." He turned to her.

"Now tell me where you've spent these nights and who's your benefactor!"

"Nobody," said Maria. She covered her pretty

face with her hand to hide her eyes from Turchin's insolent stare. "Why don't you people tell me what you want and stop torturing me?"

"There's enough time to talk afterwards." Turchin outstretched his huge arms, grabbed Maria as though he were a hawk and hurled her to the floor.

On the threshold, Shevchuk kept himself busy with his axe. He had chopped down the young cherry tree by the window and was now cleaning it of the branches.

"The stake's ready," he told his boss.

"We can talk now. Lift her up," Turchin said to one of the thugs, pointing at Maria with his finger. She could hardly stand on her feet.

"Tell us who's been hiding you," the bandit by the name of Hrybok glared at the woman.

"Nobody."

"You aren't going to confess, are you? Okay, boys, give her the treatment. Let's see what she has to say after that."

They unbuttoned the top of her blouse, forced her hands crossed and shoved them down her belt. After that, they bent her head to her knees and tied her elbows to them. Shevchuk, a reputed third degree expert, pushed the stake he had just made under the woman's breasts, behind her tied hands. It was by this stick that the bandits suspended Maria from the hooks in the beams of the ceiling and left her hanging there.

"Tell us the truth and we'll untie you."

"Nobody's been hiding me."

Turchin grabbed a ramrod and hit her bare heels as hard as he could.

"You butcher, you can hit me all you want. You won't be able to hit everybody. I'll die, but

even these silent walls will tell people how you tortured me. You're dogs, you and your Banderas, and you'll die like dogs!" she moaned and shut her large blue eyes.

Turchin kept on swinging the ramrod even after she had fainted.

A snowstorm was raging outside, its rigid snowflakes cutting at the faces of the murderers as they carried Maria over the drifts. They didn't even pull out the stake and just hurled her down the well where they had previously thrown her husband.

Maria, who had drawn life-giving water from that well to quench her and her husband's thirst and to water her flowers, and her husband weren't the only ones to meet their end at its bottom. Their bodies were followed by those of little children and elderly mothers whom the gangsters buried there under a shower of sharp-edged stones. That was how the well, nourishing its water from a spring deep underground, which sustained plants and human beings was turned into a well of death.

Years have passed. Relatives recovered the remains of the male and female martyrs of OUN terror. Today, clear water still sparkles down the well's depth of 60 m. The sun still bathes its rays in its crystal mirror. But it remains a Dead Well.

WOLVES BITE

When old Yakim and Motrya Fridrikh bluntly refused to give their well-fed hog to the Banderites, Shevchuk lost no time reporting the incident to his boss.

One winter night, the bandits surrounded the Fridrikh home. The old couple was asleep, as was their teenage son Roman.

"Listen, someone's knocking on the window," Motrya shook her husband awake.

Someone was already banging on the door.

"Whoever's the master of the house, come and show us the road to Mizoch," shouted Turchin.

"Don't open the door!" Motrya clung to her husband. "Let'em knock all they want. They'll go away, perhaps."

The Banderites, however, didn't. They pressed their shoulders to the door and broke it down.

"Get dressed, the two of you," the intruders trained their guns on the old couple.

Roman had heard the commotion and now cautiously peeped from behind the stove. He recognized Shevchuk who was talking to Turchin. When his parents had been prodded out of the house, the boy ran after them but he was stopped by the bandits.

"You run home this very minute, or I'll shoot you," Shevchuk threatened him.

Roman ran away and hid in a neighbor's barn. He was close enough to hear the bandits bastinado his father and mother. Afterwards, they herded them somewhere. The boy was home before sunrise. He came across his father's hat lying on the snow in front of the woodshed. There were drops of blood, frozen, forming a clearly visible track which Roman followed. It led him to the vegetable garden and past it, toward the Verkhiv Forest. The track vanished at the bottom of a deep ravine where thick snow, brush and

trees concealed the mystery of the death of his parents. He crawled all over, trying to find the bodies. When he didn't, he began to hope his father and mother were still alive. He ventured another journey in the thick of the forest and there, down a little ditch, he found the dead bodies. He spotted a twisted kerchief bound around his mother's neck. He was to learn that Shevchuk had used this piece of cloth to strangle the woman by inserting a stick in the knot and twisting it around and around, until the woman suffocated. His father's head had been bashed in with some metal object, his hands twisted and tied behind his back. He must have offered some resistance but, apparently, had not been able to tear himself clear of the butchers' claws.

Roman ran to the village and managed to persuade some of the neighbors to give him a wagon and horses to pick up the bodies of his parents and provide a decent burial in the village graveyard.

They gave him the wagon and horses. He rode off to the forest. The boy hadn't even pushed his way through the snowdrifts to where the corpses lay when he was intercepted by Shevchuk.

"Where are you heading for?" the man gave him a sidelong look from under his heavy brows.

"Please, let me take my father and mother," the boy pleaded.

"You get the hell out of here, or the same's sure to happen to you." Shevchuk slipped his submachine gun off his shoulder and pressed the muzzle against the boy's nose.

"Smell it. Isn't it sweet?" he grinned nastily.

Somehow, Roman wasn't afraid to ask, "Are you really afraid of the dead?"

What followed was a shower of blows on Roman's head. Shevchuk himself turned the horses and drove the boy out of the forest.

That same night, Vasil Shevchuk, together with other gangsters, again raided the Fridrikh house. Luckily, Roman hadn't planned to spend the night there. They couldn't find the boy and, angered by this failure, the Banderites stuck the pig, killed what sheep they could spot and dragged the meat up to the Turetska Hora hill.

It was only two weeks later that Roman and his relatives managed to steal the blackened bodies of the boy's parents which were still down that same ditch in the Verkhiv Forest.

THE OUTCASTS

Venedikt Drozd never liked to work. He preferred to have others do it and feed him. When the Nazis occupied Derman, this kulak offspring could finally raise his head. He got himself a rifle and never parted with it on village streets. He promptly announced himself a soldier of the notorious Ukrainian Insurgent Army.

He embarked on his new militant course by making his poor neighbors plow his field, reap the rye and spread manure. But this didn't satisfy his greed.

One September day, a woman with two small children came running into the village. By miracle, they managed to run away from Nazi guards. This Ukrainian mother must have traveled a long road, perhaps from Kiev or Vinnitsya region.

While they were being herded, on their route, through the forest, the woman and her small ones succeeded to get lost amidst the trees. It must have been the mother's ill luck that she sought help from none other than Venedikt Drozd.

"Would you kindly good man show me the way to the East?" she asked him, her children clinging to her as the woman told her story of grief and suffering.

"Sure. Why not?" Venedikt agreed. Then, for reasons known best to himself, he stepped inside the house. A minute or two later, he reappeared, training his rifle on the fugitives.

"Let's go," he mumbled.

The woman didn't want to go. "Where are you taking us innocent people?" She tried to resist. "I haven't done anything wrong." Venedikt paid no heed but told her and her children to step on it. They saw he meant it.

He led them as far as his neighbor's kitchen garden. The woman dropped to her knees, pleading with the traitor. She kissed his dirty boots and the children kissed the butcher's hands.

"Please don't kill us!" they begged.

Drozd pushed the three of them away. His rifle gave out three loud reports and the neighbors heard three lives cut short that instant.

The murderer picked up the small package the woman had on her and went home.

Yes, he was fond of others' belongings. He was always willing to take wheat, cows, sheep and pigs from the villagers for the benefit of other greedy scoundrels of the UPA. Part of the loot never failed to find its way to the barn of the kulak.

However, this source of "income" was soon cut short. The Nazis were driven away and Drozd found it too risky to hang around the village with his rifle in broad daylight. While still in "legal capacity," he got to know Turchin bandits down the pits of the Turetska Hora hill. Now, at night, the ringleader sent Drozd and Vasil Kalchuk, a man the same age as Drozd, to their Judas job in the village. During the Nazi occupation, Kalchuk had helped maintain liason between separate district OUN chieftains. Later, he had been involved in fabricating slanderous anti-Soviet leaflets. Together with other villains, he had, for a period, gone to ground in the Turetska Hora hill.

Drozd and Kalchuk became real friends and nothing could force them apart. Once, Vasil's mother went to the market in the town of Mizoch. There, she met with a Kucheruk woman, her neighbor. At home she told Drozd that the woman had sold some flour and brought her husband an excellent pair of shoes.

"I must have them, I have to," Venedikt told himself.

He did as he thought. Together with his friend Vasil, Venedikt chose the right moment to face the Kucheruk woman in her garden.

"Is your name Kucheruk?" he inquired of the woman in his usual downcast posture, as though first seeing her.

"Come off it, Venedikt. You've known me long enough."

"What do you know, she remembers my name." Venedikt cursed. "We're going to show you how to feed the Bolsheviks. Lie down!"

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves." The

woman eyed the Banderite and his assistant with disgust, spat at their feet and turned to go.

Drozd overtook her and threw her to the ground. Kalchuk then sat on her back, so she wouldn't run away, while his friend counted the blows of his whistling ramrod. After a while, he asked the woman: "Are you giving us the shoes, or not?"

"Why didn't you say that at the start?" was the woman's acid retort.

Eventually, Drozd had worked himself up so that he could no longer watch people living nearby purchase something decent, or when a well-fed pig gave a shrill cry in their shed. He simply went out of his mind that this wasn't to be his own.

Among his neighbors was the Trofimchuk family. They lived an ordinary working man's life. Once, they had even volunteered to befriend the Drozds as Venedikt was invited to stand godfather to their child. However, since Drozd had sold his body and soul to the yellow-blue scum, the Trofimchuks had come to hate his guts. They had even put it straight to him that they knew his true worth. As the front line had crossed Derman, the Trofimchuks had gone out to greet the Soviet troops. They had done it with sincere affection. This was a big day in Derman. The Trofimchuks had been joined by the rest of the villagers who welcomed the liberators. Everybody was anxious to invite the Soviet soldiers to treat them to a hearty meal. Trofimchuk was so elated that he killed his hog as a symbol that the violent rule of the Nazi brass hats was over for good.

Derman was celebrating.

Drozd made himself swear he would never let that pass for the Trofimchuks. Later when they were the first to join the local collective farm, he decided it was time he paid his visit. He did. He turned up without his tommy-gun. He was accompanied by Kalchuk. The two pretended they had just dropped in to play cards.

Late in the evening, when the entire family had assembled, Drozd dropped his hand of cards and yelled, "Enough fooling around! Hands up, all of you!" After that, he whipped out a revolver from under his belt. At that very instant, the door was thrust open and several other armed men broke into the house. They tied up the family, hand and foot.

Drozd wouldn't let anyone shoot. He was afraid someone might be within the earshot out in the street. He picked a spade instead, pressed the sharp blade to Trofimchuk's throat as he lay sprawled underneath the butcher and brought it home with his foot. He killed them the way a farmer digs up potatoes. He didn't even spare the goddaughter whom he had once carried inside the church as her appointed godfather.

The following day, Drozd was to be found at the funeral procession, seeing the Trofimchuks off to their final destination. The nerve of the cutthroat, who had lost what little humaneness he had in himself, to make a public appearance.

The priest was swinging his thurible, intoning "Requiescat in pace." Drozd listened to his word, wiping crocodile tears from his cheeks. "I'm so sorry for my goddaughter," he said.

AN 18-YEAR-OLD VICTIM

The mood which prevails in the Verkhiv Forest every fall can be best described as some veil of grief hanging over. Then, the rich and powerful crowns topping the tall trees lose their splendor as their bright yellow leaves fall to the ground in a golden drizzle. Still, there is a song whose words are even more gruesome.

*"Banderite villains,
What have you done?
You've killed young Komsomol girls
Who were guilty of no crimes."*

This verse was born of the people's wrath. It is a living memory of the terrifying nights of the "Derman tragedy".

These simple and truthful lines expose the heinous deeds of OUNite thugs. They belong to Mykola Maksis, a young poet and a member of the Young Communist League — the Komsomol. He had not yet turned 18. The severe beauty of the Volyn Tatras had captured the young man's heart and nourished his poetic talent. However, he wasn't destined to glorify their charms in his writings. His happy life, which had been like a blooming field in which one could only take in the waving sea of golden ripe wheat after long years of poverty and grief, had charged him with the joy of creativeness, richness of thought and the great strength of inspiration. His poetic song about the cloudless life of his people was never finished.

Only a song still lives, handed down by generations by word of mouth. The music of which also belongs to Mykola Maksis. Once, it was

played on a wooden pipe, one he had made himself.

The son of a former poor hired laborer, he could now study at a Soviet school — something never even dreamed of by Maksis's parents, grandparents and ancestors. They could neither read nor write and all their hard-calloused hands were accustomed to was the exhaustive, daily toil, building still greater fortunes for the propertied. They had thus spent their whole joyless lives.

Thus, when characters who had turned traitors to his people had started to brandish their blood-stained axes, the young Komsomol member couldn't but brand them with his scorching verse.

Two Komsomol girls were on their way from Mizoch to the village libraries where they were employed. They were apprehended by a Banderrite detail. They were beheaded with crusty axes and their hearts were torn out of their chests, all this for the only reason that the poor girls had been determined to sow the seeds of knowledge and good in people's hearts.

Mykola Maksis wrote a song about the two young martyrs. It was sung not only in Derman but throughout the Rovno Region. If a song is given poetic wings, they say, then it flies from one person to another, and nothing can stop it.

It reached the ears of Turchin in his dark bunker. Foaming at the mouth, the butcher yelled, "Kill the poet!"

However, his associates persuaded him they could do better still. They had made up their mind to try to win the poet over to their side, to

buy his soul, to make him a troubadour of their bloody accomplishments.

Turchin agreed and assigned the task to the traitor Vasil Kalchuk. This inept author of dirty anti-Soviet leaflets met with Mykola Maksis and did his utmost to wiggle-waggle his way into the young poet's confidence. He praised his talent and tried, seemingly casually, to get him interested in some cheap booklets and thumbled leaflets.

"We'll publish your poetry," he assured Maksis, "but you've got to write about us."

He even went so far as to promise the young man money and publicity in advance.

The treacherous assassin would meet the young poet when Maksis was returning home from school, or he would get him out of the house secretly at night. "There are people across the ocean who're sure to give us help when we're all set to win our victory," he whispered his venomous thoughts into the boy's ear.

But Mykola Maksis, true to his Komsomol faith, would not be corrupted.

Turchin, too, wasn't going to put up with such insolence. Once, after Kalchuk reported that Mykola Maksis had refused to listen to his soliloquy and told him to beat it, the ringleader decided it was time he dealt with the poet personally.

The Maksises were through with threshing toward the evening when a stack of fresh, fragrant hay had been put up and sheaves of rye had been piled in the yard.

His mother had given Mykola some milk for supper and she and his father had busied themselves with the winnowing machine.

Just then, Kalchuk walked into the yard. He was accompanied by Turchin and Drozd. Shevchuk remained in the gateway, wrapped in his waterproof cope, positioning himself so that no one could recognize him.

"Threshing for the communists, aren't you?" Kalchuk inquired.

"Don't you think communists may be people just like us?" Pavlo Maksis asked back, still operating the machine.

"You must've earned this grain at the collective farm." Venedikt Drozd had taken a step closer to old Maksis.

"Sure. You wouldn't give me any, or would you?"

Turchin gave the Komsomol member's parents a long ominous look. "Is Mykola at home?"

"He's in the house," said the woman.

Turchin whipped out a pistol from behind the legging of his boot and stepped on the threshold.

"Wait, what d'you think you're doing?" Pavlo Maksis grabbed the bandit by the hand. "Why the gun?"

"Come now, there's nothing to worry about," Turchin sounded reassuring. "It's simply that you've got to have your irons ready when you step into a stranger's shack."

Turchin kicked the door open with one of his heavily nailed boots.

"Enjoying your milk?" he said after he had broken into the room.

Mykola put the cup down on the edge of the table.

"Give me your Komsomol membership card." Turchin had approached Mykola.

"I'll die first," replied the young man.

He tried to resist the thugs, too, his lock of thick dark hair danced desperately on his high forehead.

The gorillas forced his arms twisted behind his back.

His parents rushed to his rescue. Kalchuk shoved the old couple to the side. He said he'd kill any of the two if they tried it again.

People living next door saw Mykola Maksis, the Komsomol member, being prodded past them, with his head lifted high with pride. They also heard his husky voice as the young fellow addressed these wrathful words to the bandits.

"I'm not afraid of you. It's you bastards who ought to be afraid for your traitors' skin. Everyone hates your guts. The people will trample you to dust. Soviet power will avenge me!"

Mykola Maksis was led past the gates and forced to lie down by two big stones.

"Shoot him!" came Turchin's angry order.

Kalchuk pulled the trigger of his pistol. Its dull report tore into the autumnal dusk.

Pavlo Maksis, beaten, lay under a small haystack. Flashing through his mind were words from the threatening notes he had often found pinned to the door but which he had never showed Mykola. "Don't let your son go to the show! Don't send him to school!" Now the father knew who the author was.

The two stones by the Maksis are still there, marking the place where the noble blood of Komsomol member Mykola Maksis, a would-be poet, was shed.

He was just about 18 then. As the dearest remembrance, every spring when cherry trees

are in blossom in the mountains around Derman, and in the fall when trees start losing their yellow crowns, later once again to prosper in the fresh green attire, the poet's song is sung by people who have changed some of its words:

*"Banderite villains,
What have you done?
You've killed a young Komsomol man
Who was guilty of nothing.
Stormy wind will scatter
Your accursed bones.
No-one shall ever forget
The young Komsomol man."*

This song is heard in all villages. It serves as the best proof of Derman's resisting and freedom-loving spirit. Its people were never forced to their knees by the yellow-blue OUNite turn-coats and murderers. They fought on.

Today, stories are still told in Derman about how the entire village struggled against the nationalist outcasts. In the first postwar years, Derman youth joined into a pursuit group whose members were affectionately called "little fighters." This group helped Soviet security forces seek out and destroy Banderite gangsters.

Members of the voluntary pursuit group Miletiy Levchuk, Vasil Krasovsky, Varfolomiy Kirilyuk and many others repeatedly beat off raids by the Turchin band on the village. In one such clash, Derman inhabitant, "little fighter" Onopriy Khorovets died the death of a hero.

All Derman residents felt deep hatred toward the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists and knew no rest until the last of the Banderite thugs had been incapacitated.

Like all other Western Ukrainian villages, Der-

man didn't yield an inch to the yellow-blue scum. The hard-working farmers themselves fought to destroy the nationalists as their worst enemies, to strengthen Soviet power, to build a new collective-farm life.

NEVER GIVE UP HAPPINESS

Derman lives a new, happy life. Prosperity and joy have settled in its homes. Children have already grown up who don't fully understand the meaning of words like "landlord" or "kulak" and who know about the atrocities committed by the nationalist riffraff only from their parents.

However, there are still people abroad who cannot reconcile themselves to the fact that the working people of Derman, under the star of Soviet power, have won their true happiness, that they are creating their great destiny by themselves. This well-being is a pain in their neck.

One of these characters is a man by the name of Samchuk. Long forgotten in his native parts, he presently hangs around somewhere overseas. Although he was born in Derman, people there don't even want to mention his name. Living abroad, he poses as a man of letters. But this is nothing other than the mask of a clever crook. One cannot remain silent, knowing that this false identity conceals an advocate of misanthropy, slavery, abuses of human dignity. He is a mouthpiece of falsehood and hatred, an inspirer of blood-covered killers and monsters in human form.

Since 1925, he has been wandering in all kinds of places abroad in pursuit of his dubious goals,

surrounded by outspoken enemies of the Ukrainian people.

What did Smachuk do during the years of the war? Certainly the same thing as the rest of the nationalists. He was a diligent servant of the Nazis.

In fact, Samchuk left behind rather descriptive documented evidence of his role as a "builder of the nation" during the German Nazi occupation. These documents consist of files of pro-Nazi newspapers, among them **The Volyn**, the editorial staff which he headed.

Few other mercenaries have ever shown such devotion to their masters as did Samchuk in the service of the Nazis. His pen produced lengthy editorials, articles commenting on Hitler's speeches and Koch's savage directives, pouring down the pages, merging in one dirty stream.

For example, the article "Adolf Hitler" in the September 14, 1941 issue. In the author's crazed imagination, Hitler was a "man of exceptional range and extraordinary spiritual strength." Things like that could be written only by a person who felt joy seeing ruins, smelling the acrid smoke of blazing homes, looking at shot and tortured to death Ukrainians.

Things like that could only be said by a brazen traitor and an enemy of the Ukrainian people. This is what Samchuk is really like.

Heinrich Rotaugé, a correspondent of the German Information Bureau, spoke with admiration of the diligence with which Samchuk prepared slanderous "Ukrainian reports." The Nazis held him in much esteem. In his youth, this man had dreamed of recognition and money. They gave him both. He edited his newspaper, was one of

the editors of the Ukrainian section of the German press. In addition, he held some rank at the Department for Propaganda of the Reichskommissariat.

The Ukraine was ablaze, while Samchuk, so to say, roasted his chickens on this fire, building his fortune on the suffering of his kin. When the Nazis seized Zaluzhya, he turned up in Derman to rejoice at the grief and tortures of his former fellow villagers.

"More initiative!" Samchuk called on the OUNite thugs as they proceeded to strangle and butcher Soviet people.

Even Borovets, this bandit, Ukrainian Nazi policeman and murderer responsible for the deaths of thousands in Polissya, was stunned by Samchuk's resourceful diligence in his service to their common masters, his pompous odes and songs of glory to Nazism. In a fit of temper, Borovets called him a "Nazi lickspit."

And the toady firelessly scribbled his odes. He was also given due by his employers. In the same issue of **The Volyn** which carried Samchuk's editorial urging the Ukrainian working masses to display obedience and faithfully serve their newly-made masters, a certain Daven wrote: "He (Samchuk) will carry out with honors all the instructions of his leadership."

He did. When the avenging hand of the people gripped Nazism by the throat, Samchuk promptly turned his attention to prospective employers — American imperialists. In the very same **The Volyn**, he set to hammering it into the heads of the OUNites that they had to "dream according to New York categories."

Samchuk knew perfectly well what the score was, so he was now singing a new tune, trying to curry favor with the new bosses.

Ukrainian youth living abroad and their parents should know the true worth of every bit of rotten lies uttered or written by Samchuk. Indeed, what else could be expected of this fatherless son? Could he really be frank about the past criminal encroachments and the present treacherous schemes of the OUN racket?

Would he ever divulge how the yellow-blue turncoats sold themselves to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, then to the kaiser, the British-American-French interventionists, the Russian White Guard emigrants, Pilsudski followers, German Nazism and, finally, to the reactionary imperialist circles? The Ukrainian nation fully realized what they were after, so when it joined efforts with the other peoples of the Soviet Union in repelling and then routing the Nazi aggressors, it dealt a ruthless blow to their hirelings. Only a handful of them managed to escape their people's just retribution, among these Samchuk, a slave of the Nazi slanderous pen.

Types of the Samchuk cast may feel to sell themselves body and soul whoever they choose, but they shall never be able to sell the Ukrainian people! This people has proved this fact time and again. This truth has been proven by history itself.

Naturally, having first fled to Munich and then still further, to Toronto, Samchuk today grieves over his comrades, other Nazi mercenaries upon whom the Ukrainian people have taken merciless revenge.

Yes, the Ukrainian people would not pardon a single OUN ruffian who was guilty of atrocities, the mere mention of which makes one's blood run cold. They threw children down wells, tied their fathers and mothers with barbed wire, crucified people on tree trunks, driving nails through their limbs, hanged victims by their feet and set fires under their heads, gauged out their eyes and roasted them alive.

May the eternal curses of mothers, their bitter tears for their children whom they had given the dearest thing of all — life — befall the hateful heads of all those wearing the brand of Cain and Judas!

Samchuk's mumbling that the "OUNites aimed their reprisals only against communists" is to no avail. You can rest assured, Mr. Samchuk, that if there were 450 communists in Derman, Turchin gorillas would have never dared put in a single foul appearance at that village!

Samchuk's other heated allegation is that "Only OUN Banderites committed acts of violence against peaceful and guiltless farmers. OUN Melnykites have never been fratricides."

To us Ukrainians, it is all the same whether those cutthroats belonged to the Melnyk or Banderite clique. It is impossible to divide one's enemies into good and bad people. The covers of Samchuk's books, published during Nazi occupation, were made of exactly the same yellow paper as the Banderite leaflets.

Is it not a fact that there was the so-called "Melnyk camp" of the Khrin-Nedzvetsky cutthroats in the spring of 1943, in the thick of the forest between the villages of Martinivka and Antonivka in Verba District, Rovno Region, and

between the villages of Stizhok and Lishnya in Kremenets District? Early in the occupation, Khrin-Nedzvetsky was the commandant of the gendarme force of Kremenets District. Later, he joined the gangs of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and, together with them, committed acts of terrorism against peaceful residents. Was not a Melnykite by the name of Soltys responsible for the formation, that same 1943 year, near Lutsk, of what became known as the "Ukrainian Self-Defense Legion"? Eventually, this legion, jointly with the Nazis, atrociously fought the participants of the Warsaw uprising.

These facts bear direct evidence that there was no difference between the Melnykites and the Banderites.

It is for this reason that the Ukrainian people hated both with equal force and, when the day of reckoning came, subjected them to equally just retributions.

The gang which maintained a bloody reign of violence in Derman was also brought to justice by the people. Below is an excerpt from a letter by Derman villagers to the chairman of the assize of the Rovno District Court which heard the case of the OUNite murderer Shevchuk:

"Today, as never before, our hearts are brimming with hatred of this gang of Ukrainian nationalists, including Shevchuk, whose hands are washed in the blood of our fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters.

"At a time when the entire Soviet people was healing the wounds of the Great Patriotic War, Shevchuk still continued to operate, hindering peacetime construction. Therefore, expressing our great wrath toward this accursed bandit, ma-

rauder and parasite, on behalf of all honest residents of our village, we request that you sentence Shevchuk to capital punishment by shooting."

This is only one of many thousands of letters in which vast working masses of the Ukraine voiced their boundless hatred of the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists and demanded that they be condemned to death.

And could they feel any different?

What was Derman like under tsarist autocracy and landlord Poland? Who owned the place?

In different periods, it was owned by different landlords who owned two-thirds of the land in the village. In other words, they were in possession of 4,000 hectares. Consisting of some 1,000 homesteads, Derman had made ends meet on one-third of the land, the plots being scattered over deep ravines and on top of hills. The forest? It belonged to the landlord.

With the coming of Soviet rule, nothing any longer belonged to the landlord.

At present, Derman (now Ustenske) * accommodates two collective farms. No-one has to sweat over one's plow-lands. Instead, the commonly owned fields are worked by tractors and harvesters.

What were the crops like under the Russian tsar and Polish nobility? Seven centners of rye per hectare was considered a bumper harvest. And today? Thirty and more centners!

Who studied here? Who could receive an education in this village during tsarist times or

* Populated areas in Rovno Region are given according to the administrative-territorial division of the 1940s.

under Pilsudski — at the church parish school, and, later, at the theological seminary which was never reorganized as a secondary school? The student body of both almost never included local villagers.

At present, one finds here a secondary school, an 8-grade and a boarding school which is well-known in the region. Derman-Ustenske is not only a literate village. By its cultural level, it matches any urban-type center. The farms resemble agrarian experimental complexes, and the shopping and communal service facilities, the farmers' new brick homes, paved roads and sidewalks testify to the continuously increasing welfare. Things like TV sets, refrigerators and washing machines have become a perfectly common occurrence, and motorcycles and cars can be practically afforded by any agricultural worker.

If one adds to this public libraries, medical service stations and amateur performing groups, one will have an idea about the changes that have taken place in this locality.

Who gave all this to Derman? Soviet power.

With each passing day, people live more prosperously and happily. Joy and well-being are increasingly a predominant characteristic feature of the life of the Ukrainian nation.

All this was given to millions of working Ukrainians by socialism.

And what did the OUN monsters give them? Homes going down in flames, ruins, brigandage and massacres. Their names are forgotten. Only at the Folk Museum, in one of the watchtowers of the restored monastery-fortress, one can hear a guide's story about the crimes of the OUNites as a tragic, blood-covered page in the history of

the village. Back in the times of the Civil War, this village set up its own Derman Republic and fought the gangs of Pilsudski and Petlura, while confidently marching on the road leading to the village's happy destiny.

In spite of characters like Samchuk, Derman was to remain freedom-loving, Soviet. Its working people will never surrender to anybody the happy life they won in the course of struggle!

A BANDIT'S CONFESSION

It was getting dark outdoors and the woman (whom everybody knew as Granny Nikityuk) didn't know what to do. "I wish the earth parted and swallowed me up. Perhaps down there, they wouldn't get me," she thought to herself.

Kharitina, her daughter, thought something similar, as well. She took her mother by the hand and led her to a neighbor's home. The Nikityuks had a house of their own but were forced to ask people next door to let them spend the night there. People usually allowed them to sleep in the attic or in the barn. Kharitina and her mother had spent many nights hiding that way. Mostly, she would take her mother to a neighbor's barn. They would quietly slip inside and Kharitina would ease off her shoulders a thick bundle of straw, untie it, wrap her mother in it and tie it up with hard straw bands.

Although the night was quiet, the old woman couldn't sleep. She heard her daughter's receding steps—she was off, looking for shelter for herself. Where? Her mother had no idea.

The night was long and brought with it many thoughts, all of which were sad and disturbing. They swarmed through her old head. She could even hear them ring in her ears. The old woman again prayed that death come quicker. But death didn't. Instead, ghastly tortures clawed at her bleeding heart, filled her eyes with bitter, blinding tears.

What caused the old woman so much suffering was her son Olexander. As soon as the Nazis had seized their village Suymi, Olexander had been arrested and nobody knew where he was taken. There was, however, something the Nikityuks knew. They knew that no Nazis had driven up from the town of Mizoch to arrest Olexander. He had been grabbed and tied up by Suymi nationalists.

"He wanted to sign up with the collective farm," Pilip Morozyuk, one of their neighbors, tipped off the nationalists.

He followed the gang as they were herding Olexander out of the village.

Sleepless as she was, the old woman saw before her eyes her son, so tall, so handsome. She had already been planning a marriage.

One by one, roosters heralded the end of the night. She felt a little better, hoping to live through yet another day.

Dawn was breaking. Kharitina hurried into the barn and untied the bundle.

The Nikityuks spent the summer and the autumn in fear for their life.

Winter came and things got even worse.

True, the nationalists had long stopped coming to their house, but the mother and daughter were still frightened to sleep at home,

On New Year's Eve, the Nikityuks were suddenly visited by Pilip Morozyuk.

Kharitina froze.

"Happy New Year and may the new year bring you health!" He slurred, wavering drunkenly. "Aren't you glad to have a guest in your house? Got some vodka?"

"No," Kharitina managed the reply.

"Then go get it, I don't care where," he threw himself on the bench. "If you don't, the same will happen to you as to Olexander."

Kharitina had to go to the neighbors looking for liquor.

Morozyuk was gurgling down glass after glass.

The mother and daughter had moved closer to the door.

"Don't be afraid of me," their neighbor mumbled before downing another glass. "Want me to tell you how it was with Olexander? Only no tears," he shot them a threatening glance from under his thick brows. "Well, we took him to the forest. You know the works. What else can I tell you? We stopped at a clearing and tied him to a tree stump. I forgot who held him by the feet."

"My son, oh my dear son!" the mother wailed loudly.

Morozyuk angrily stamped his boot.

As though they were guilty, the mother and daughter went out in the corridor to give vent to their tears, so that nobody could hear them. Having somewhat quietened their grief, they slipped back into the room. Their neighbor was finishing a second bottle.

"So we put Olexander's head on the stump," the drunk went on with his story, while filling

another glass, "then someone was ordered to sharpen an axe."

"You cut off his head," the old woman gasped and the daughter caught her limp body.

"Don't interrupt me," their neighbor again stamped his boot. "What d'you mean cut off his head? That's no punishment at all. No, we whittled Olexander's head until we chopped it into bits like a cabbage head."

The old woman let out a single scream of unbearable pain.

There was no strength left in her.

Kharitina mustered all her vanishing energy and dragged her mother to the pantry. They were forbidden to weep aloud.

Morozyuk stayed until he finished the alcohol.

For many nights afterwards, the Nikityuks didn't sleep in their own house.

THE NIGHTS OF DEATH

Fate had been unforgivably cruel to Semen Ryeznikov. It had obviously been against letting him have what he had always wanted—to live in a noble manner. The son of an impoverished landowner from somewhere in Chernihiv Region, he had just struggled his way to promotion as an officer when the revolution broke out. Since then, he had found himself in a stragging variety of places. He had served under Denikin, Skoropadsky and Petlyura. Frankly, he hadn't cherished any special hopes on the general, hetman or otaman. At that time of trouble for landowners and the nobility, the broad bayonet of

the kaiser's soldier had seemed the only reliable support. Unfortunately, even kaiser troops had failed to protect Ryznikov. He left his beloved estate and joined Pilsudski's ranks under the banner with the white eagle. This turncoat was possessed with some pathological, animal hatred of everything called Soviet. When Petlura had concluded a secret agreement with Pilsudski, Ryznikov once again found himself thinking of his estate, of vast fertile fields upon which others would sweat to build a fortune for a Ukrainian, and not some foreign, landlord. And again his plans and dreams had been frustrated.

Fear of people's vengeance drove him as far as Radzivillove (now Chervonoarmiysk in Rovno Region). There, Pilsudski's people had quickly recognized in him a ready assistant. Even more so, Ryznikov had been shown special favors and accorded utmost hospitality. During the first days of the White Poles occupation of the Western Ukraine, he was given a responsible post in the Radzivillove Council. He was perfectly satisfied with his job and had done his best to prove his worth to the local branch of the Polish secret police, collecting incriminating information about Ukrainian workers opposing the landlord Polish administration. At first, Ryznikov managed quite easily as almost nobody knew the kind of man he was. In the meantime, his children had grown up. Rather than folktales, he kept telling them about his confiscated fertile fields in Chernihiv Region, poisoning their young hearts and minds by the venom of the nationalist doctrine. Finally, his son, Anatoly, had come to regard his father as a "martyr" and convinced himself that he had to "avenge" him.

The war came and the Nazi hordes invaded the Soviet land. The Ryeznikovs decided that their time had come. As had the kaiser's broad bayonet, the short Schmeisser, which was now spitting out death on Ukrainian soil, once again awakened their old hopes.

Ryeznikov Sr. was now an assiduous servant of SS officers, writing reports to the Gestapo HQ in Radzivillove on Soviet activists, demanding severe punishments for them.

The Nazis soon rewarded their lackey. The Landwirt appointed him as the estate manager of the manor in Ivanivka, not far from Radzivillove. Ryeznikov felt obliged by this promotion and promptly reciprocated to the Nazis when he sent 20-year-old Anatoly to serve in the police.

There, Ryeznikov Jr. quickly found himself two devoted henchmen — Dmitro Kryuchok, son of a kulak, and Mykola Bondarenko, a dumb but cruel deserter from the Soviet Army.

The Nazis ordered them to guard the railroad station of Radzivillove.

Daily, trainloads of young men and women from the Ukraine raced westward. The Nazis combed through the villages of the Right-Bank Dnieper area, Podillya and Volyn region, rounding up youth and forcing them to the Third Reich, which was badly in need of the labor pool, cheap manpower who with their sweat and blood would sustain Germany's decaying war economy.

Trains stopped at the station. Ryeznikov and his assistants kept a sharp eye on the boxcars. In spite of the bolted doors and the narrow windows firmly shut by boards, nailed crosswise,

the captives still hoped for a chance to escape. But if some desperate youth as little as tried to peep through a crack in the window, Anatoly Ryeznikov fired his gun.

Thus, while patrolling trains with forced laborers, the young Ukrainian Nazi policemen Kryuchok, Bondarenko and Ryeznikov had a sort of crash course in marksmanship. There were cases when, after the inmates had been given meager rations of stinking slops, some of them tried to run away. Then the muttonheaded Kryuchok would take up mad pursuit. He didn't like to shoot and hated the sight of blood. He suffered from a very special disease. He just couldn't miss a chance to strangle his prey with his bare hands.

The Nazis never tried to ascertain which of the captives had been killed. They were perfectly content with the report that some had been killed "in attempted escape."

Trainloads of ammunition and clothing rushed by to the front. Their way to the east wasn't cleared by trackwalkers waving their flags but by the policemen's shots.

While Ryeznikov Jr. served in the police, his father didn't waste time either and made quite a profit of his estate management. And well he might, during the course of two years of his rule. Everything was fine and dandy, except for the disturbing news from the front. The landowner finally realized it was time he found other work for his offspring. He might as well save his efforts. Ryeznikov Jr. together with Kryuchok and Bondarenko had long been affiliated to the OUN, whose local outfit they kept zealously supplied with hardware.

One day, the three best Ukrainian Nazi policemen simply vanished into thin air. The estate manager Ryeznikov shed a few tears for appearance's sake and let it known that his son had been arrested for "partisan activity."

In the OUN gang where Ryeznikov Jr. now was, his killer's experience came in very handy. Martsinkevich was badly in need of these thugs who had been properly drilled by the Gestapo. In the OUN gang, the butcher Yasny was known as the intellectual. He came from a prosperous family, had finished a Polish gymnasium school and had for a period studied icon painting in Ostrog. Soon, however, he had changed his professional interests and became a professional torturer and murderer. He liked his present position as an "investigator" and assistant to the District SB chief much better.

This cutthroat was responsible for the death of many absolutely innocent people. All he needed was one critical word about the OUN from an ordinary farmer and the poor fellow's death was imminent. Once, the sadists caught the Chuy cousins — Volodimir and Ivan — in the village of Kopaniv. Volodimir was accused of malignantly ridiculing the village elder who had told him to get ready to serve in the UPA. Ivan was to give evidence of exactly how his cousin had offended the nationalist official. Archives have the illiterate record of the "confession," written personally by Martsinkevich-Yasniy.

From this "document," it is clear that Volodimir Chuy, with somewhat rough humor, expressed his unambiguous attitude to the Banderites.

That was on September 17. Three days later,

the "investigator" reported that Volodimir and Ivan Chuy had been hanged.

Under the guidance of the subtle killer Martsinkevich, the former policemen found a vast range of opportunities to indulge in their sadistic bend.

No less than a few days later, Ryeznikov was appointed commandant. It was he who supplied the bandits with the tools for their torturing trade—tightly woven strangling cords, young oak clubs and long knives worn behind the legging of the boot. Since his promotion, not one night passed without the bandits shedding the blood of Ukrainian working people.

Once, Martsinkevish was informed that a certain Fedir Fedorovich, an old villager of Buhayivka, had refused to stand guard when ordered to do so by an OUNite gang which had occupied the village. The old man to whom the Banderites had become a great pain in the neck, taking away his bread, meat and even the wool from his sheep in a fit of temper shouted, "D'you really think I'd stand guard for a pack of OUN fools? I'd die first!"

Ryeznikov, Kryuchok and Bondarenko jumped into a sled and raced to Buhayivka to straighten out the disobedient villager. When they arrived, two, armed with submachine guns, remained in the yard, lest the old man try to jump out the window. It was already getting dark. The door into the house was open.

"Does Fedir Fedorovich live here?" asked Ryeznikov, moving his tommy gun from women to children in the room.

"Suppose he does. What now?" the old man rose from the table.

"Hands up and out into the yard!"

Fedir Fedorovich had no other choice but to obey the bandit. Walking through the corridor, the old villager heard Ryznikov threaten his family.

"You keep silent here. Don't dare make a sound. I'll shoot anyone who tries to so much as look outside."

Bondarenko rolled the tree stump on which Fedorovich chopped firewood to the center of the yard and put it upright. The old man was prodded to the stump.

"Now, man, take off your pants," growled Kryuchok.

"Listen, fellas, what're you up to?" The old man didn't understand what they wanted from him. "Stop it, I'm old enough to be your father," he pleaded with them.

"Shut your bloody trap," Bondarenko was foaming at the mouth. He bent the old man down to the stump and straddled his neck.

Ryznikov and Kryuchok dropped their guns, took oak clubs and positioned themselves on both sides of Fedir Fedorovich.

The sticks whistled. Bondarenko counted the blows.

"One, two, three, four, five..."

"This is so you'll know better than refuse to stand guard," Kryuchok said.

"This is so you'll think twice before calling OUN people fools," added Ryznikov.

Merciless blows continued. When Bondarenko counted fifty, the old man groaned, "Better kill me, boys." But nobody seemed to hear. The sticks whistled on. Finally, Fedir Fedorovich passed out. They splashed a pail of water over him

and went on torturing him. The bandits stopped only when they were out of breath. At their feet lay a motionless body, covered with blood. The shirt was in shreds, and stuck to the victim's back.

Ryeznikov had hardly had time to report to the ringleader that his order had been carried out when the former policemen were given another assignment. Word came that several Polish families on two wagons were heading from the town of Dubno to Radzivillove.

What was their guilt? Why were they killed?

The cutthroat Kryuchok replies simply, "Such was our order." Who gave these cannibal orders? The Nazi occupiers tried to kindle the flames of national discord, so that it would be easier for them to suppress every separate nation. This was why the Gestapo and the SD organized killing of innocent people. Hitler's hirelings, Polish fascists, exterminated Ukrainians, his other servants, Banderites, slaughtered Poles. Both the Banderites and the Polish fascists prayed to their only god—the swastika. Neither the Banderites nor the Polish fascists so much as touched a hair of the Nazi heads. They never hurt a single Nazi because a dog doesn't bite its master.

As soon as they were out of Dubno, the Polish families whipped their horses. Their Ukrainian neighbors had warned them of the danger they would find themselves in if the nationalists spotted them. It was winter and the horses panted their way through the deep snow. Black columns of smoke rose from where their homes had stood.

In order to intercept the fugitives, Ryeznikov unharnessed a horse from a wagon, mounted it and set out at a gallop, taking a short cut. He overtook the wagons half way from Radzivillove.

"Turn back! Now!" he roared and let off a burst from his machine gun over the fugitives' heads.

Women started crying, pleading with him, children gripped their mothers and fearfully clung to them. But all this had no effect on Ryeznikov.

The horses were turned back.

Bondarenko, Kryuchok and other thugs led by Martsinkevich approached the small caravan when it was still plowing its way through the snow.

The Poles were ordered to drive to the Sestratin Forest. There were ten of them in all. The bandits chased them off the wagons, forced them to strip and piled them one on top of another in a clearing. Children hid their heads under their mothers' arms, but Bondarenko pulled them up by their ears and placed them in a row on the snow.

"Use the tommy gun!" yelled Kryuchok.

But Martsinkevich was in no hurry. Slowly he pulled his revolver out of its holster. Ryeznikov pulled his out of his boot. Puffing at their cigarettes, the two of them stood among their defenseless prey, taking careful aims at heads and pulling the trigger. Martsinkevich took his time firing. He wanted to see if Ryeznikov's hand was trembling. It was not.

The echo of shots shook silver snow off the fluffy branches of fir trees.

On the way to the village, one of the bandits asked Yasniy, "Why did I have to weave ropes if you were going to shoot them?"

"Your labor won't be wasted, my friend Bli-skavitsya. Don't worry," replied the leader.

The "probation term" of the former policemen was over. Now Martsinkevich knew he could fully rely on them.

After each night's manhunt and brigandage, at dawn, the villains would steal back to the forest. Marko and Yasniy would give their thugs a brief shuteye and then wake them for the morning prayer. The cutthroats, whose hands were washed to the elbows in people's blood, would piously make the sign of the cross, obediently sink to their knees and plead with the Lord Almighty that He grant them strength and His blessings. And the number of prayers the OUN chiefs thought up for the rank and file nationalists, for them to ask God to bestow Bandera and other chiefs with sound health!

Through with praying, the mutton-headed bandits would shed their sheep's skins and don back the wolf's.

That time, their next raid must have been of special importance, for, contrary to the routine procedure, the thugs weren't split up as separate details, each made up of several bandits. Instead, they were led off in full strength.

Shortly before that, chief of the SB force Stodolya (Olexander Sukharsky) had sent a letter to Yuri Martsinkevich to the effect that anti-OUN moods had grown conspicuously among the residents of his "beat." The message also contained the names of people who had refused to supply

the nationalists with food, horses, and who had expressed indignation over the bloody Banderite terror. Sukharsky wrote of those displeased by the OUN's actions: "These are the most harmful wasps which must be dealt with first thing."

Martsinkevich then meticulously copied the names in his special notebook. That night, the gang crawled out of its lair to stage another bloody reprisal to bully the residents of the nearby villages.

The sun was just setting to the horizon, kindly spreading its luminence over the village of Ivanivka. People, however, were afraid to be caught outdoors after sunset. They all kept themselves behind locked doors. Apart from some children playing on the street, the village seemed deserted. The children scattered like scared sparrows the instant they saw the armed bandits.

The nationalists surrounded the smithery that belonged to the estate managed by Semen Ryznikov. The blacksmith's name was Vasil Brechko. He was known and respected in the village as a hard-working, clever and prudent man. He had been a hired laborer under landlord Poland. In 1939, after the reunification with the Soviet Ukraine, the villagers had elected him Chairman of the Village Soviet. Blacksmith Brechko had never been a communist, but, like other poor people, he loved Soviet power with all his heart, was devoted to it body and soul.

A skilled blacksmith, he earned a living for his family by his trade during the war.

When OUN chief Volyanyuk stepped into the smithery, Vasil Brechko was working on a plow-share. The red-hot piece of metal was bending

on the anvil. The bellows was breathing heavily. Sitting to the side was a large group of villagers who had come for a friendly chat as was their habit.

"Who's the master of the house?" inquired Volyanyuk, keeping one hand in his pocket.

"I am," replied the blacksmith and wiped the sweat off his brow. "You come on business?"

"Let's go into the house and discuss it there. I'd like you to fix my thrashing machine."

"What village are you from?"

"We'll go to your house first and talk things over after."

Vasil Brechko went out of the smithery and, seeing the characters hanging around, wanted to go back, but they didn't let him. The scared villagers inside were brusquely told to beat it.

Only then did it dawn on the blacksmith why the estate manager Semen Ryznikov had dropped in previously to ask him not to leave the village all day but to make plowshares.

His wife poured water into a cup so the blacksmith could wash his face, but Volyanyuk was impatient.

"Hurry up!"

Vasil only had time to take off his well-worn apron and slip a jacket on his shoulders.

His wife was forbidden to leave the house.

Ryznikov Jr. threw a horse bridle on the blacksmith's head and tied the ends to the sled. That was how they rode through the village to the other end before they came to a halt in front of the home of Hrihoriy Saliychuk.

Sitting on the porch was the host in company with some neighbors. He was telling them that Nazi punitive detachments were combing

through villages, confiscating grain. They could turn up in Ivanivka any day now.

Ryeznikov and several other bandits went to take Hrihoriy Saliychuk. The men in command remained in the sled. Saliychuk's wife, Hanna, instantly recognized Anatoliy Ryeznikov. She had seen him in the summer when harvest time had just started. Having almost no land of their own, the Saliychuks had had to get themselves hired by the estate manager. A shock or two of rye had been due them for their work, but the manager's son had drawn his pistol and forbid them their share.

"You'll have to ride with us," Ryeznikov declared, stepping up to the porch. "As to the lot of you," he indicated to the neighbors with his submachine gun, "get out of here this minute."

Hanna was trying to tell the bandits that nobody had taken any shocks from the estate's field, that her husband had done nothing wrong.

Still, they took him away.

Hrihoriy Saliychuk could walk only on crutches. He had lost his leg during the Civil War (1918-1920) when serving under Budionniy. He had a hard time getting from the yard to the street. Snow flakes followed the quickly receding form of the sled to which Vasil Brechko was tied by the bridle.

The captives were interrogated one by one in a house owned by a local kulak.

Ryeznikov was standing by the door. Sitting behind the table were Volyanyuk, Steblik and Martsinkevich.

At the time Kryuchok was guarding Hrihoriy Saliychuk.

"Do you incite people against the OUN?" Steblik shot his question at Vasil Brechko and banged his fist on the table for emphasis. The impact sent the windowpanes ringing.

Vasil Brechko said nothing.

"We'll loosen your tongue yet." Steblik pushed himself from behind the table and shoved the ends of two thin wires into Brechko's hands. "Better hold them, or we'll fix them with a rope." He turned to the alcove and shouted. "You can roll it, Obukhl"

Vasil Brechko's body twisted at a sudden shock that pierced it. He fell to the floor.

"You'll talk now, won't you?" Steblik bent over him and Martsinkevich raised his pen, ready to write.

The only thing that the blacksmith understood was that they were torturing him with high voltage electricity. Which was true. A sizeable dynamo stood in the alcove, manned by Obukh (Bondarenko).

"Get up!" Ryznikov grabbed Vasil Brechko by the collar and lifted him to his feet.

"It's your turn now, Bliskavitsya."

Ryznikov and Bondarenko quickly tied the blacksmith to a chair and gagged him with a piece of cloth. After that, they started clubbing him and continued until blood showed through their victim's clothes. To bring the smith back to his senses, they let him drink some water.

Bondarenko slipped a noose round Vasil's neck, tightened it so it cut in the man's neck, then abruptly let go.

"Tell us who in Ivanivka doesn't like the OUN and we'll let you free," promised Martsinkevich. Brechko kept silent.

Enraged, the Banderites went to work on him again. Now they inserted the thin wires into his mouth. After several shocks tore through him, Vasil could no longer move his tongue.

They splashed more water over him.

Martsinkevich the "investigator" spoke to the blacksmith in a kind voice.

"Is it true that you gathered people in your smithery?"

"They came to me themselves. People hate you," whispered the blacksmith.

They cut him with a bayonet, roasted his heels, but he kept mum.

Hrihoriy Saliychuk was also severely tortured. They crushed his fingers between doors, used pincers to pull out his fingernails and repeatedly exposed him to electric shocks.

The dynamo whose discovery had benefited humanity so much became, in the hands of the bandits, an implement of inhuman suffering for honest people.

Volyanyuk, Steblik and Martsinkevish passed their verdict: Vasil Brechko and Hrihoriy Saliychuk were to be executed.

The two mutilated bodies were found by relatives in a kitchen garden outside the village. The eyes of both had been gauged out and their tongues cut off...

A Nazi punitive detachment entered Ivanivka the next morning.

This was how the OUNite sadists cleared the way for the Nazis.

Dmitro Sukhanov was from a family of workers, living in Radzivillove. Under landlord Poland, he had experienced many dark days. The coming

of the Red Army had literally saved Dmitro and his family from death by starvation. After reunification, he had actively involved himself in public and political life. In 1939-40 Sukhanov had worked on the Revolutionary Committee of Radzivillove and had been a delegate to the People's Legislative Assembly which had expressed the will of the masses when it announced the reunification of the Western Ukrainian lands with their mother — Soviet Ukraine.

With the coming of the Nazis, Dmitro Sukhanov found it increasingly harder to live where he did, so he decided to part with his home town and find refuge with his sister Tetyana Tushakivska who was married and lived in the village of Buhayivtsi.

The Banderite killers had not deprived that village of their deadly care and on the very day of his arrival there Sukhanov was arrested. But the thugs who had apprehended him missed their chance of reprisal. As they were leading him to the center of the village — it was night — he took advantage of the darkness and, using his old experience (he had on several occasions and under similar circumstances escaped from Polish and German fascist gendarmes), knocked down one of the bandits and lost himself between the buildings.

Martsinkevich could not forgive his henchmen for letting Sukhanov out of their hands. Tetyana Tushakivska's home was placed under surveillance. The bandits found excuses to frequent the house. Martsinkevich time and again asked Tetyana:

"When's Dmitro coming back? Where's he hiding?"

Tetyana replied:

"I don't know."

They resorted to threats.

"We'll kill you if you don't give us your brother's whereabouts."

Every evening now Tetyana Tushakivska quietly left the house and sought refuge with some of the neighbors.

Her disappearances alarmed the thugs. Martsinkevich ordered her to be found. Dmitro Kryuchok who lived next door promised he would catch Tetyana come what may and bring her to the bandit's "justice."

He didn't find her that evening, so he decided to try again the following day. Kryuchok met Tetyana on the street and told her he had important news for her. He led her inside his own barn where another Banderite, Nazarchuk, had been posted. They tied up the woman, threw her on top of a wagon and covered her with straw, lest someone should see what they had as they drove through the village. It was hard getting to the village of Sestratin, because the road had turned into one pool of mud and the horses were tired. In Sestratin, they drove up to the home of the Maslovskys whom the nationalists had murdered earlier and whose place they were now using as their HQ. They found nobody there, so they harnessed an additional horse and set off to the village of Baranne. But Martsinkevich wasn't here also. Kryuchok was met by Ryznikov and Bondarenko. They came to a whispered agreement on something and drove Tetyana to the settlement of Sirnova.

The road took a steep winding course uphill. A heavy object slipped from under the straw on

the wagon and dropped to the road. As Bondarenko retrieved it, Tetyana saw it was an axe.

"Where are you taking me, Dmitro? Please, let me go. I've known you since you were a child," the woman kept pleading with Kryuchok as they rode on. But he turned a deaf ear to her and paid no attention even when her pleading turned into sobbing.

Seeing the gleaming blade of the axe in the hands of the murderers, the woman stiffened. They shoved her off the wagon and prodded her to a young pine grove at the edge of the forest.

Bondarenko and Kryuchok were arguing about something and Tetyana chose the moment to say to her treacherous neighbor:

"You'll kill me, but you'll never get away with it either."

Kryuchok snatched the rifle from his shoulder and fired. Then he took a well-cut brown coat and new shoes off the dead woman and returned to where the wagon stood, with a stupid grin playing on his lips.

Young pines, unperturbed, were rustling over Tetyana's prostrate body.

The closer the front line approached the locality, the more violent became the packs of Banderite wolves. On cold winter nights, echo carried far the shrieks and laments of their tortured prey. The darkness was pierced by flashes as the bandits set village homes on fire. This was how the Nazi collaborators were getting even with ordinary people whose only fault was that they were waiting for the return of Soviet power which would forever protect the peaceful laborer from

the bloody violence and ruthless lynching of the handful of scoundrels who called themselves "fighters for the free and independent Ukraine."

The Ukrainian working people saw no difference between the Gestapo and OUN thugs and understood that all of them were one gang of their outspoken enemies. Ukrainian workers and peasants helped Soviet partisans and not the Ukrainian Nazi mercenaries. They never believed the lies of the yellow-blue riffraff.

Nor did Ivan Sukhanov, an ordinary resident of the village of Buhayivka. He looked forward to the coming of the Soviet Army, the liberator. Kiev had already been freed, and the Nazi scum was being swept further to the west. The aggressors were now concerned only with how to save their skin. Some of the villagers used to gather at Ivan Sukhanov's to dream about freedom from the Nazi yoke, about how happily they would live afterward. Talking like that often lasted long into the night.

But Ivan wasn't destined to see the great happy day of liberation.

They came for him at night. He had just gone to the neighbors on some matter.

Ryeznikov ordered his bandits to take ambush around Sukhanov's home. He himself decided to wait for Sukhanov inside, sitting and napping on a bench. He didn't allow Nadia, Ivan's wife, to leave the house and the woman was now lulling her baby. Her elder son, Boris, had hidden in the alcove and was afraid even to peep into the sitting room. Nadia's heart was bleeding, tortured by the realization that she was unable to warn her husband of the danger.

Ivan Sukhanov had hardly stepped over the threshold when Ryeznikov was beside him.

"Raise your hands! You are under arrest."

He frisked the peasant. All he found was a small bar of steel for striking fire.

After a pause, he shouted:

"Let's go!"

Winter was mild that year and it was thawing outside. Instead of boots, Ivan wore a pair of light, often patched over shoes.

"At least let him change his foot-clouts," Nadia asked the bandit.

"He won't need them," Ryeznikov said evenly.

Nadia burst into tears. She understood that they wouldn't let Ivan out of their hands alive.

"You're taking my husband, then take me as well!" she cried in despair.

Ryeznikov hit her on the back with his fist and told her to stay home and quit sniveling, but Nadia was all set to follow her husband to the very end. She whispered into Boris's ear that he tell the neighbors to look after him and his sister. After that, she ran to catch up with the OUN-ites who were leading Ivan away.

The Banderites beat the woman up, but she still followed them. Finally, they twisted her arms behind her back and tied them with rope, as they had done before to Ivan.

From the home village, the couple was driven to Bezodnya. There, Ivan and Nadia were herded into a house. Inside, they saw their fellow villagers — the Demchuk brothers, Timofiy and Volodimir — who had also been forced there by the bandits.

The peasants were kept under tight guard. They couldn't sleep all night, each thinking of

what lay ahead. They had been forbidden to speak.

At dawn, the OUNites again trussed them up and shoved them under the benches where they lay for a long time.

Finally, Martsinkevich came and told them to get ready for interrogation.

Ivan Sukhanov tried to have his wife spared.

"Why don't you let her go? She's got a small child to look after."

"We'll consider it in due time," replied Yasniy, pacing the room, hands in pockets.

Ivan was the first to be questioned. Then the Demchuk brothers.

While interrogating, Yasniy was handed a long message addressed to Volyanyuk, District Superior of the OUN. The letter read that the SB service had, by sheer accident, arrested Sukhanov and the Demchuks, all residents of the village of Buhayivka, who were honest people and had done nobody any harm. It was signed by half the village. Martsinkevich tore up the message with contempt and threw the shreds to his feet. To his associates, he said:

"Write those Buhayivka fools that we'll make them see what their fellow villagers are guilty of. They'll know better than to solicit next time."

Ivan Sukhanov was brutally tortured, while being mocked at. They beat him with clubs and ramrods and exposed him to electric shocks.

They made him identify Volodimir and Timofiy Demchuk, cross examined them and forced them to lick each other's wounds.

The two brothers were charged with awaiting the Soviet Army.

When the captives passed out, the sadists gagged them with pieces of cloth and poured water in their nostrils. There seemed no bounds to their monstrous inventiveness.

Nadia spent all that day trussed up under the bench. In the evening, they took her for questioning.

One of the brutalized gorillas slammed his fist in her face. Blue circles appeared before her eyes.

Martsinkevich ordered to bring in the witness — one Yurchenko. He turned out to be a small rawboned and jumpy character who looked like a scared kitten. He reported that he had heard with his own ears how Ivan Sukhanov spoke ill of the OUN and promised that the day of liberation would soon come.

Nadia said that she had never seen Yurchenko before, that outside of their neighbors and relatives, nobody had ever visited them.

"What have you done to my husband?" she asked the bandits.

"If we had a prison, we'd have locked you and your husband up for life, so you'd have never seen the sun again. But since we don't, we simply killed the man," replied Yasniy evenly.

Ryeznikov grabbed Nadia by the sleeve and started dragging her out of the room. She noticed that her husband's scarf was tied round his neck.

Waiting for her at her house were her infant and little son, but the bandits didn't let her go. They gave Nadia nothing to eat, threw her out on the snow bound with ropes. They ruthlessly beat her, pulling out locks of her hair. She no

longer wept after her husband; she was thinking of her orphaned children.

"You've killed my husband, at least spare me," she pleaded with Ryznikov and Martsinkevich.

They tortured her for three days.

On the fourth day, Martsinkevich ordered her to go home. The OUNite werewolves believed the "unloyal" elements would by all means get in touch with her.

"Don't tell anybody where you've been and whom you've seen. If you let one single word slip out, you're as good as hanged," Martsinkevich warned the woman.

Nadia couldn't walk home, she ran. In the village, she met Hrihoriy Demchuk, brother of Timofiy and Volodimir. From him, she learned that Ivan and both Demchuk brothers had been shot on a spot of land behind Bezodnya.

Such atrocious reprisals befell civilians, peaceful tillers in many villages. All these people sought to be full masters of their own destiny, in their own native land. That was why the OUN butchers murdered them. They did this during the last days of the Nazi occupation, shortly before they themselves were destroyed.

Still, no tortures or suffering could undermine the unswerving belief of millions of toilers in their better future under the star of Soviet power. The ardent hopes and expectations of the Ukrainian people finally came true.

The blessed hour of freedom finally came. Like the first breath of fragrant spring wind that awakens frozen earth from winter sleep, like the hot sun in the blue sky above that bestows life to all which is capable of living under it, did the

working man of western Ukraine greet his brothers-liberators. Then thousands of lips seemed to move in unison to utter these words:

"Forever together with our Soviet brothers!"

"May there always be freedom and peace!"

A liberated, prosperous, joyous life then came to every town and village in the western Ukraine.

Nazi henchmen like Volyanyuk, Steblik, Martsinkevich and Ryznikov couldn't save their souls. All these traitors and hardened enemies of the Ukrainian people were brought before their people's court, the world's most just court. The people refused to pardon them, for no nation can forgive its traitors!

WHAT WAS HIS GUILT?

Word was spread in the village that Ivan Cherukha had been shot by the well. His body had tumbled down the well and sank with a loud splash... but the man had later climbed out. The bullet had not gotten Ivan... .

This happened toward the end of the war. Battles were raging somewhere near East Prussia while in this area there was only rubble and smoking ruins—mute witnesses of past battles. Ivan Cherukha hadn't gone to the front and had been a member of an OUN gang but had later given himself up to Soviet authorities and they had pardoned him. Now he worked as a carpenter in Ostrog. His family lived in the village of Milyatin and he decided to visit them at that time.

Toward evening, he reached home from Ostrog. For his son, two-year-old Mykola, he brought candies, for his sister, a teenaged girl called Hanna, there was a white kerchief.

Ivan's father, Olexander Cherukha, was, perhaps, the happiest to see Ivan. At night, the two of them dug up potatoes in the garden and brought them home, and made a neat shack of rye. It was autumn and the rains could start any day now.

Their chores took them well into the night, so they went to bed late.

Little Mykola had been anxious to get a lap-ride from his father, but had fallen asleep.

The night covered the windows with a pitch-dark veil. The only sound was the rustling of the ash tree by the gates, but it was also receding, as though lulled.

Khimka, Ivan's elderly mother, was sleeping on top of the stove. Old Olexander and Hanna had made themselves as comfortable as they could in the alcove. Ivan and his wife Nadia were sleeping in the guest room. Mykola was with them, too, cuddled up tightly to his father. Nadia's hand was resting on the cradle with five-month-old Vira.

Old Olexander was the first to hear the knock on the window. Quietly, he slipped into the guest room and peeped through the window.

"Who's there?" he asked squinting into the darkness outside.

"Open the door, don't you recognize friends?"

"Friends don't go knocking on people's windows at night."

"Open up, damn you!" whoever was outside was now banging at both windows.

Old Cherukha argued, "If you're friends, then come in the morning."

"Keep your mouth shut or you're sure to get yourself into one hell of trouble." Those outside cocked their guns and trained them at him through the windowpanes. Some of them uttered a rude curse, something like why bother asking the old man. There was a good pile of firewood by the shed, chopped by Cherukha for the winter.

"Listen, man, if you don't open that door, we're gonna' break it down with these here logs of firewood."

Old Olexander looked at his son and the grandchildren. In the semidarkness he could see the scared face of his wife Khimka. There was no choice. Barefooted, he padded across the cold floor to the vestibule. He had hardly unbolted the door when it was thrust open and three armed men burst in, stamping loudly with their heavy boots.

Khimka wanted to light a lantern but they didn't allow her. There wasn't anybody from the village among the intruders, or the family would have recognized them.

"Is Ivan Cherukha home?" asked the man with a thick beard, holding a submachine gun.

"Yes, that's me," said the carpenter.

"Get dressed and let's go. Take two pairs of underwear and put on your Sunday best."

"Please, where are you taking him?" the old mother was wringing her hands. Nadia burst into tears and the children followed suit.

"You shut up there," the bearded man stamped his foot. "Nothing will happen to your Ivan."

He's had enough time making money. Let him now serve with us."

Old Olexander tried to see his son off, but the OUNites ordered him to stay put if he didn't want to get a slug in his head.

The only thing the daughter-in-law and Ivan's father could see was that Ivan was herded across the fields to the natural boundary Milivshchina. They didn't see how the bandits twisted his hands back and tied them up, slipping a noose round his neck, lest he should try to cut and run.

In the night, tall trees were waving in the wind, losing their yellow attire. Three figures materialized from behind the shrubs and walked toward Ivan and his captors. The carpenter recognized them as Petro Kuzminchuk, Hnat Medvid and Fedir Lavrenyuk. All three were fellow villagers, each almost his own age.

"So you've caught him, my friend Mykola," Petro Kuzminchuk addressed the bearded man with the submachine gun. Mykola was the alias of Tkachuk, the "subdistrict OUN leader" from the neighboring village of Moshchanitsya.

"Yes, we've caught him," he replied. "Now you get down to business."

Ivan hoped that Kuzminchuk would help him get free. As small boys they had herded cattle and gone to school together. But Kuzminchuk pushed Ivan with the butt of his gun and ordered him to strip. Ivan was slow about it, so Medvid and Lavrenyuk ripped off everything he had on.

"So you go into town to work, do you? Sold yourself to them?" barked Kuzminchuk and slam-

med the grip of his revolver in young Cherukha's face as hard as he could.

"Lie down," Medvid shouted.

Ivan tried to resist, but they hit him in the temple with some blunt object.

"His father was the first to join the collective farm in 1940," snarled Lavrenyuk.

"Is this true?" demanded the OUN chief.

"It's true," Ivan managed to reply. He no longer was conscious of the bandits beating him with their clubs, cutting him with their bayonets. When he finally came to, he asked them quietly, "Give me some water."

"Sure. You'll have lots of it in a minute," Kuzminchuk mocked at him. The bandits grabbed him and dragged him to an old dilapidated well. The ringleader personally shot him in the head.

"We'll take care of the family, don't worry," Kuzminchuk assured Tkachuk.

"Okay, but see you don't let'em slip away," he ordered, picked Ivan's small package of underwear and went to the forest.

Some two hours passed. The Cherukhas were still wide awake. The old man tried to persuade the women:

"We must get out of here, fast, because they'll surely come for us, too."

Nadia, stricken with grief, now bent over the cradle and then over the bed in which Mykola lay sleeping.

"If Ivan's no longer alive, then there's no reason why I should live," she told her father-in-law.

The old man was right in the misgivings; his heart must have foretold disaster. Again somebody knocked on the door.

"Open up, it's me, Petro, your neighbor."

"What do you want?"

"I must tell you something. Don't you trust me in your house? We're somehow related, aren't we? Uncle Olexander, your granny was married to my grandfather."

But Cherukha didn't open the door.

"Come on, let me in, there's something I want to tell you about Ivan," persisted Kuzminchuk. Nadia dashed in the vestibule.

The OUNites had their guns ready. They ordered her to light the room.

"I'll write a message now and you'll deliver it," Kuzminchuk told Nadia.

"She isn't going to take any messages to anybody," retorted old Cherukha.

"That has nothing to do with organizing collective farms, has it? So you better hold your pace," the bandits clicked their guns cocked. Hnat and Fedir ran up to the old man but he gripped their guns by the barrels and pushed them aside.

"Children, wife, save yourselves!"

Almost simultaneously shots rang out, but old Olexander's hands seemed glued to the now scorching guns.

Nadia rushed to her children but Kuzminchuk barred her way with a burst from his Tommy gun. The woman then made for the door, followed by Ivan's sister Hanna. Kuzminchuk grabbed Khimka by the shoulders.

The old man managed to run out of the house together with his daughter-in-law and Hanna. Old Cherukha took a winding course between the shed and the barn, pursued by the brutalized thugs. They shot at him and he fell. Then he got up again.

"Petro, catch the women!" Medvid called out to Kuzminchuk.

Kuzminchuk fired again but the old man had dropped flat in a furrow. He didn't hear the report. Thinking that his daughter-in-law and Hanna had managed to escape, he calmed down somewhat. Surely the bandits wouldn't do any harm to Khimka and the children.

As the first light touched the horizon, the old man decided to return home. He carefully placed his feet in the muddy field until he stealthily climbed over the wire fence and into his garden. He ventured a tentative glance from behind a corner of his house and froze at the sound of rustling from the corn in his garden as it parted to let out the figure of Ivan, his son. He was covered by blood all over and was standing stark naked before his father. The two of them silently walked up to each other and as silently went into their home.

The doors were ajar. The old mother's body was sprawled on the threshold. Her hand had been chopped off and thrown into the vestibule.

The room bathed in blood. Nadia lay, her hands outstretched as though determined, in her last spark of life, to embrace her children. She had intended to do so, but had fallen dead from a blow with the axe head. It delivered her right in the middle of the sitting room.

Ivan bent to look into the cradle. His small daughter seemed fast asleep. The living pink colors could still be seen fading on her cheeks. Ivan moved to touch what was left of his darling, his little sweet daughter Vira. And he was reasonably convinced to attest to her well-learned lesson whereby she was supposed to respond

by those sounds which, to him, served as the equivalents of "dad" and "mom". He took a closer look and saw what he had to do. Ivan placed his fingers on her unseeing eyes to close them from this world. For ever. His daughter was soaked in her own blood.

Small Mykola was awake when he applied his tiny physical resources to present what he believed would be his masculine pressure on the delicately embroidered piece of cloth. The tiny body looked totally relaxed in what the onlooker would consider to be his sleep. Asleep, this small human body might be so very much alive, except for the little mouth hanging open, quite unnaturally so, with the lips going blue for lack of air. One of the bandits shot the child in the mouth.

The gray-haired form of the head of old Cherukha was bent low. His son Ivan, badly wounded as he was, caught in his arms the limp body of his father. If he didn't, his father would have just tumbled down.

CRIME AFTER CRIME

The village of Horodets is 25 km. from Volodimirets, so Yukhim Kukla, a guard at the local factory manufacturing alcohol, never spent nights in the little town. He fared well and seemed to have enough of everything to make him content with the way he lived. All his children went to school.

But, the OUNites were far from content with the way Yukhim was getting along. The man had obviously forgotten what it had been like to

be a hired laborer, working on someone else's field, sweating to stuff the already bulging pockets of the rich.

It started with Yukhim's wife whispering as he returned from work that she had again found a slip of paper in the vestibule. The anonymous author threatened the factory guard with reprisal if he didn't quit working in the town.

That evening in January of 1945, the factory guard had hardly stepped into his house when Odarka motioned him out of the room. She didn't want her mother-in-law to hear what she had to tell him. Why scare the old woman?

"Somebody's dropped a note again. Looks like whoever it is won't put up with our good life."

Yukhim unfolded the paper. The threat was there, all right. If Yukhim Kukla keeps working at the factory, he won't escape punishment, promised the bandits.

"Please, do as they tell you," Orarka pleaded with her husband.

"Have I stolen anything or killed somebody? Why should I be afraid of them? They had better worry about their own skins."

Supper just didn't taste right that evening. All ate in gloomy silence.

They were just getting ready for bed when there was a knock at the door.

"C'mon out, man."

"Is that you, Mikhailo?" Odarka recognized the voice of their neighbor who happened to have the same surname. Everybody knew that he was hiding somewhere in the forest. But he was their neighbor, so why not let him in?

"Open that door," Mikhailo now demanded. "So you've recognized me. You'll never do it again."

Mikhailo propped something up against the door. Come what may, he wasn't going to let whoever was outside into the house.

The moon was bright and the night was clear. Through the window, Yukhim identified Overko Biloborody and Vasil Kupchishin. Bang at the door hard as they did, they couldn't break in. Overko then smashed the window with the butt of his rifle and jumped into the guest room. Yukhim and Odarka had hidden in the vestibule. Overko dashed there and pushed open the door but didn't see them.

The unwelcome guests started to search the house for the hosts. In the general commotion, Odarka managed to slip out undetected and, undressed as she was, rushed to where their neighbor Mikhailo Kukla lived.

"Wake up, please, hurry!" she was standing by the window, speaking to Mikhailo's mother. "They've come to kill Yukhim. Your Mikhailo's there, too. Perhaps you could persuade him to spare my husband!"

The old woman dressed slowly. Finally, she joined Odarka and the two hurried to the latter's home. Suddenly they heard a sharp gun report.

"It's too late," said the bandit's mother.

Odarka couldn't remember how she reached her gates.

Armed with tommy guns, rifles and sawed-off guns, the OUNites were carrying bundles of clothes and sacks of grain out of the house, piling them on a sleigh.

Odarka had hidden behind a corner of the house and watched the marauders. "They're robbing me, but the hell with it. What was that shot?" she was asking herself.

The sleigh started off out of the yard. She raced into the house. She found Yukhim on the floor in the vestibule, a pool of blood under his sprawled body. His shirt had been torn and the sadists had carved a scarlet five-pointed star in his chest with their knives.

Her mother-in-law and the children lay in the corner between the stove and the wall. The old woman had tried to save her son but Kupchishin had chased her and the children in that corner and had stunned each with a blow of his heavy butt. The children were motionless on the floor and seemed unconscious.

As custom dictated, Odarka washed Yukhim's body, but there was nothing in which to dress the corpse; the Banderites had done a clean job on the family's belongings. She went to some neighbors and they gave her a piece of white linen. She covered her husband's face with it.

Few attended the funeral. People were afraid to come. The only one who didn't was Vasil Salivonik. He had made the coffin and now helped carry the body to the cemetery.

The old mother sobbed after her son, the wife after her husband and the children after their father.

Why had the bandits killed him?

"Damn you bloodthirsty beasts! Damn you, damn you!" Vasil Salivonik could hold back his feelings no longer. "Your turn will come, too, just you wait and see!"

There must have been a double-faced scoundrel among the mourners who tipped off Biloborody. The latter found the moment to catch Vasil Salivonik unawares and herded him to the gang's hideout in the forest.

Trees were cracking with the cold. The OUNites ordered Salivonik to get firewood and make a fire on a forest clearing. He chopped and carried, but every time they said it wasn't enough and told him to bring more.

Finally, Biloborody was bored by his work.

"Now, boys, set fire to that there pile. We'll warm up a bit."

The damp wood hissed, then succumbed. Big flames danced, illuminating the forest clearing.

"Now you tell us how you cursed us," Biloborody snarled at Vasil.

"I'll tell you straight to your face. It's unthinkable that one should kill people for nothing." Vasil was a simple person and didn't know how to beat around the bush.

On hearing Salivonik's reply, Biloborody shook with rage.

"You must be a Soviet agent!" he shouted.

"Goodness me, I know nothing apart from my plow and cultivator."

"Put him on the 'machine', boys."

The Banderites fell on Vasil Salivonik like a swarm of angry wasps. In a minute, he was hanging from a branch fixed between two trees.

"Confess!" rang in Vasil's ears.

But what was there the poor man could tell if he wasn't guilty of anything? Was he to tell them that he had helped bury in a proper manner his neighbor Yukhim Kukla, his fellow villager? He had made no secret of it.

Clubs and ramrods whistled.

Fire was burning in the center of the forest clearing, the flames jumping high and almost licking the crowns of the trees.

The butchers grabbed Vasil Salivonik, gave the body a swing and hurled it into the fire.

Sparks flew up and the flames were even brighter, shedding blood-red color on the forest clearing.

BECAUSE OF THEIR SONS

The front line had just moved further to the west. Spring was warm and bright. From dawn till dusk Diofan and Marta Demidyuk worked each day on their kitchen garden. Their two sons had gone to the front.

The old couple understood that the day of victory was near and were waiting for their sons to return. Their only consolation in the long, painful waiting were letters which they received from time to time, delivered by military post.

That evening, Diofan was reading one such letter, one he had read so many times before.

Somebody rapped softly on the door.

"Come in," the old man folded the letter. "The door's unlocked."

Several soldiers entered the room. All wore ordinary khaki shirts and garrison caps with red stars pinned up front.

"Good evening," they greeted the host.

"Good evening."

"Begging your pardon, what's the name of this village?" a tall man with lieutenant's shoulder straps inquired. "Looks like we've lost our bearings."

"Chernitsi's the name."

"Korets District?"

"That's right. You must've travelled a long way if you don't know?"

"We aren't local, that's for sure," the lieutenant sat on the bench. "Banderites, the bandits, haven't visited you by any chance?"

"Why should they? I'm a poor man. You'd better look for them in rich people's homes."

"So you know where they're hiding?" the lieutenant sprang from his seat. "Where's your wife?"

Old Diofan understood that his visitors weren't Soviet soldiers but disguised Banderites. Of course, Demidyuk couldn't know that the man dressed as a lieutenant was Fedir Skoromniy, chief of the Hamalia SB force. Another "soldier", a jerky character who couldn't stand still even for a moment, was a bandit by the name of Leon Krutenchuk.

"Where's your old lady?" demanded Skoromniy.

"Marta's spending the night with her sister."

"Go with this soldier," Skoromniy pointed at Krutenchuk, "and bring your wife home. Make it on the double, while we search the house."

Had the old man been escorted by only one bandit, they would've never seen him again. In the yard, however, they were joined by two others. They tied Diofan's hands.

Marta and her sister were already asleep. Krutenchuk wasn't one to abide by the rules of decency. He smashed the window with the butt of his rifle.

"Marta Demidyuk!" he yelled, "out fast!"

Back at the Demidyuks', Skoromniy felt more than at home. He had even changed into Dio-

fan's clean underwear which he had found in the trunk.

He started to interrogate the old couple by asking: "Where are your sons?"

"Same place as all grown children of decent parentage. At the front," Diofan said.

"So you've brought them up to serve Moscow?" Skoromniy swung his fist and hit the old man in the face who staggered but kept standing.

"And you figured they'd be vagabonds just like you?" the old man cut back.

Skoromniy was foaming at the mouth. Like a man possessed, he dashed to the table, snatched the knife with which the Demidyuks cut bread and raised it over Diofan's head. The old man sank to his knees and then slid sprawling to the floor.

"Your turn now," the sadist whirled round to where Marta stood.

Her eyes were shut and the old woman was trembling all over, trying without success to place her hands the way she always did when praying.

"Le-let me p-pray to Go-od f-first," she stut-tered.

"Oh but sure. I'll make the sign of the cross for you!"

Old Marta fell under his knife.

The Demidyuks were still alive. Krutenchuk cocked his rifle with a loud click and shot Diofan. He trained the weapon at Marta but there was no report: the cartridge got stuck. He hit the woman in the head with the butt....

Spring was nice that year.

For a long time afterwards, letters from their sons kept arriving...

"FOR A CHUNK OF ROTTEN SAUSAGE..."

Who were the superiors of bloodthirsty gorillas like Ryeznikov, Morozyuk, Medvid, Biloborody, Skoromniy and others, of whom not a trace has been left on Soviet soil? Who supported them and instructed them to torture and slaughter honest and innocent people?

Those OUN remnants who now feed on the garbage heaps of imperialist espionage centers, try with all their power to show themselves clean. But a dog will always be a dog and howl.

Otherwise, nobody would have fed them with leftovers from richly laid tables.

Can anybody deny that these characters diligently served the German Nazis, carried out their most heinous assignments?

It is an established fact that, on the eve of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945), nobody other than the Nazis in Franc's Generalgouvernement came out as guardians of the OUN ruling elite. At the time, the latter included Stepan Bandera, Roman Shukhevich, Mykola Lebed and Volodimir Horboviy.

Following a meeting between this racket and Hein, CO of the Gestapo force in Cracow, this telegram was sent to Berlin: "Great Führer! We are sending you greetings on behalf of the entire Ukrainian people. We are declaring our allegiance and devotion to you. Heil Hitler! (signed) Volodimir Horboviy."

Hitler replied that he had authorized the formation of a Banderite legion as a component of the **Wehrmacht** and subordinate to its command.

This legion was made up of hardened criminals and placed under the command of the ban-

dit Shukhevich. Together with the rest of the **Wehrmacht**, the legion thugs did their horrible job in the Ukraine, yelling the notorious **Deutschland über alles!**

At a time when the whole of the Ukrainian nation joined ranks with all the other Soviet peoples to fight a sacred war against the Nazi aggressors and lived with the only thought of victory, the nationalists helped the Nazis carry out their inhuman plan for the extermination of all Slavs, soaking their native Ukrainian land in human blood. Ukrainian workers and peasants ruthlessly combated the OUN scum. This is an undeniable fact which stands and will stand despite the desperate efforts of nationalist survivors abroad to prove differently. It isn't accidental that all these mercenaries are scared stiff of their own people's vengeance.

Actually, who but the worst enemies of the Ukrainian working masses could man those nationalist gangs? More often than not, these gangs consisted of former big and small kulaks.

Now, take the upper echelons of the OUN underground network. Who were in charge of what was pompously called "local administrations," with as pretentious ranks like "district leader" or "regional supervisor"? What class interests did they protect?

For instance, take "regional supervisor" Vere-shchaka, whose real name is Fedir Vorobets. Where did he come from? One can still find many people in the village of Horozhantsi (Ternopil Region) who had once sweated on fields belonging to the kulak family to which he was born. On those joyous days when, by the people's will, Western Ukraine was reunited with the

Soviet Ukraine, Fedir Vorobets took to his heels and found sanctuary in Cracow, the center of the Nazi Generalgouvernement. In Cracow, a certain Deichakovsky helped him get in touch with the OUN. Vorobets turned up in Rovno Region again in the wake of the Nazi onslaught as a soldier of the Shukhevich-led Ukrainian Nazi legion. Determined to win promotion from the Nazis, he mercilessly tortured and butchered civilian residents.

Kulak Vorobets is the author of the horrifying "five-count" instruction, whereby the population of the given village were herded to its center and every fifth villager was shot.

Even greater cruelty marked Stepan Yanishevsky-Dalekiy who succeeded Vorobets after he had found himself in the dock.

After three years at a theological seminary, Yanishevsky had changed the pectoral cross and aspergill for a bandit's knife. Once the Nazis entered Lviv, he hurried there from the village of Vitvitsya in Stanislav Region. The OUN sent Yanishevsky to Vinnitsya where he served as a policeman in a police guard battalion, commanded by Omelyanovich-Pavlenko, formerly a general under Petlura. The Petlurite CO appreciated the skill of the ex-seminary thug. The Nazis appointed Yanishevsky as second-in-command on the police force of Vinnitsya. To show the Nazis his true worth, he volunteered to murder and torture innocent people. Once, he and a group of Gestapo men drove to the little town of Sitkivtsi. On entering it, they met ten residents whom Yanishevsky personally shot.

He not only killed his prey. He was a sturdy marauder, robbing people not only for his own

but also for the OUN's benefit. During a meeting in Rovno with Klim Savur (Dmitro Klyachivsky), the chief of another OUN gang, for example, Yanishevsky handed him 50,000 Reichsmarks, an amount of gold teeth that had been kicked out of victims' mouths, gold rings and other loot.

Having finally received access to power, this scoundrel couldn't spend a single day without shedding innocent blood. Almost daily, he wrote dispatches to his subordinate ruffians.

"My friend Yaroslav," reads one such message, addressed to some nationalist ringleader, "you must remember that torturing and killing is our mission. Roll up your sleeves, quick march!"

Forward march against whom? Kill whom? Plain ordinary people, it appears, those who liked Soviet power better than the OUN riffraff.

Still, at times, Yanishevsky felt pangs of envy, realizing that his sadistic instincts and techniques couldn't match those of his immediate superior Smok (Bohdan Kozak). The latter not only butchered his victims, he took special delight in their writhing agony. Kozak also contrived the notorious SB "machine" — a pole from which people were suspended by inserting it through their tied hands and feet.

Bitter rivalry started between Yanishevsky and Kozak who could not divide power between themselves — all the worse for innocent residents on whom they worked off their hurt feelings and whom their thugs continued to torture.

Among the ruffians who sprang to activity at that turbulent period was a certain Anatoly Mayevsky, born in the village of Kustina, Rovno Region. Under landlord Poland, his father had owned a little store and some 20 hectares of land.

As a small boy, Anatoly had been regarded by the family as mentally retarded. His father had done his best to give his son an education, bringing his teachers gifts and fawning on them, but the little bum was expelled from the gymnasium school for total lack of progress. The only thing Mayevsky Jr. knew well was trading—in money or human souls. To him, it made no difference how.

This inborn craft flourished thanks to his sister Zoya who married Volodimir Andrushkiv, a prison guard in the town of Horodok (Lviv Region) under Pilsudski. Needless to say, Zoya and her spouse cut and ran to the Germans on one of the exciting days of reunification.

During the Nazi occupation, Andrushkiv helped his brother-in-law find a job at the so-called Benevolent Committee which robbed the population for "voluntary donations" to the OUN. Incidentally, some of the loot went to finance the pro-Nazi newspaper **The Volyn**. As befitted a crafty trading agent, Mayevsky pocketed a substantial part of the money.

When the occupation came to its shattering end, Mayevsky went underground. For a long time it seemed that he had vanished into thin air when suddenly he surfaced again, this time proclaiming himself an OUN "district leader".

This cutthroat regarded Smok's torturing "machine" as a child's toy. He introduced a whole system of new techniques. His victims were roasted and tortured with red-hot irons. On top of all that, Mayevsky singled out what was termed "action days." They were actually nights, nights of violence and blood. On one such night, Mayevsky's gorillas tortured to death 48 poor Ukrainian families in the villages on the border

between Hoshchany and Zdolbuniv districts. People were burned, strangled and murdered by driving draw-bolts through their ears and gauging out their eyes with harrow teeth.

The butcher Mayevsky killed but neither did he forget his old habit of robbing his prey. He was feared not only by farmers in nearby villages, but even by rank-and-file OUNites, especially those who had some money to their name. He was as treacherous as the devil himself, as corrupted as Judas and as jumpy as a hare. He didn't even trust his closest associates. This is perhaps the reason why he left this world, in the manner he did. Frightened of retribution for his crimes, he hid in a deep bunker where he had stocked his booty and shut the hatch so tight he never opened it again.

Such is the true face of the OUN rulers. Such are the undeniable facts. This is the truth and it must not be forgotten.

On instructions from Vorobets, Kozak, Yanishevsky and Mayevsky who had sold themselves to the Nazis "for a chunk of rotten sausage" and followed Stepan Bandera's orders, the nationalists subjected to inhuman tortures and slaughtered hundreds of innocent people. In doing their dirty job, these fratricides stopped short of nothing.

The Ukrainian people is fully aware whose interests these villains protected when trudging their footpaths in the thick of the forest and hiding in their damp dugouts. They protected the interests of kulaks, landlords and those who linked their hopes to fore'gn invaders.

Hatred which will never pass, contempt to which there are no bounds, shame and curse

which will never be lifted — this is the trace left by the OUN monsters in the people's memory.

Traitors, torturers and killers of their own kin will never have a place in the Soviet free land.

All these nationalist survivors who have no Motherland are now fawning on imperialists. Their hands are washed in the blood of the Ukrainian people. This must be known to all honest compatriots whom bitter fate had forced to live abroad. May they remember that their happiness is not in some strange land, but in the land of their ancestors, in our Soviet Ukrainian land.

Great Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko wrote:

*"And in foreign climes,
Do not seek, do not ask for
That which no man finds
In heaven above, let alone
In a foreign kingdom.
One's own truth in one's own home,
One's own power and freedom."*

Standing on a steep hill over the Dnieper, I find myself thinking, oh how beautiful you are, my beloved Ukraine! You are shining like a bright star in the galaxy of the fraternal peoples. You are shining over the world with the lights of the Dneproges, you are reaching for the skies with your Donbas coal heaps and furnaces, you are like a sea with rolling ripe wheat fields stretching from the Siversky Donetsk River to the pine-blue Carpathian Mountains!

I see you rise to the sun in all your heroic might and glory, flourishing in the garland of the sister-republics, growing ever stronger for the good of peace, happiness and well-being.

I bend to scoop some of your life-giving water. As I drink it, a streaming flow of love fills all of me. This love is for you, oh my Ukraine!



45 коп.

